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ABSTRACT

This handbook is intended to assist South Dakota school districts in developing and implementing educational programs for gifted students. It is noted that state regulations provide a minimum standard for gifted programs, but do not limit services and leave room for flexibility in planning according to each district's needs. The first section briefly lists characteristics of gifted students and notes the state mandate to provide programming for these students. Requirements in program management are summarized, including responsibilities for program implementation, documentation, funding, staff development, and teacher certification. Guidelines for screening and identification are given next. Curriculum options are briefly addressed, including responsibility for curriculum determination by school districts and delivery models and strategies. Program and student evaluation and parent and community involvement are also briefly considered. A glossary defines 33 terms in gifted education. Twenty-two additional resources are recommended. (DB)

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Handbook for Implementing a District Gifted Education Plan

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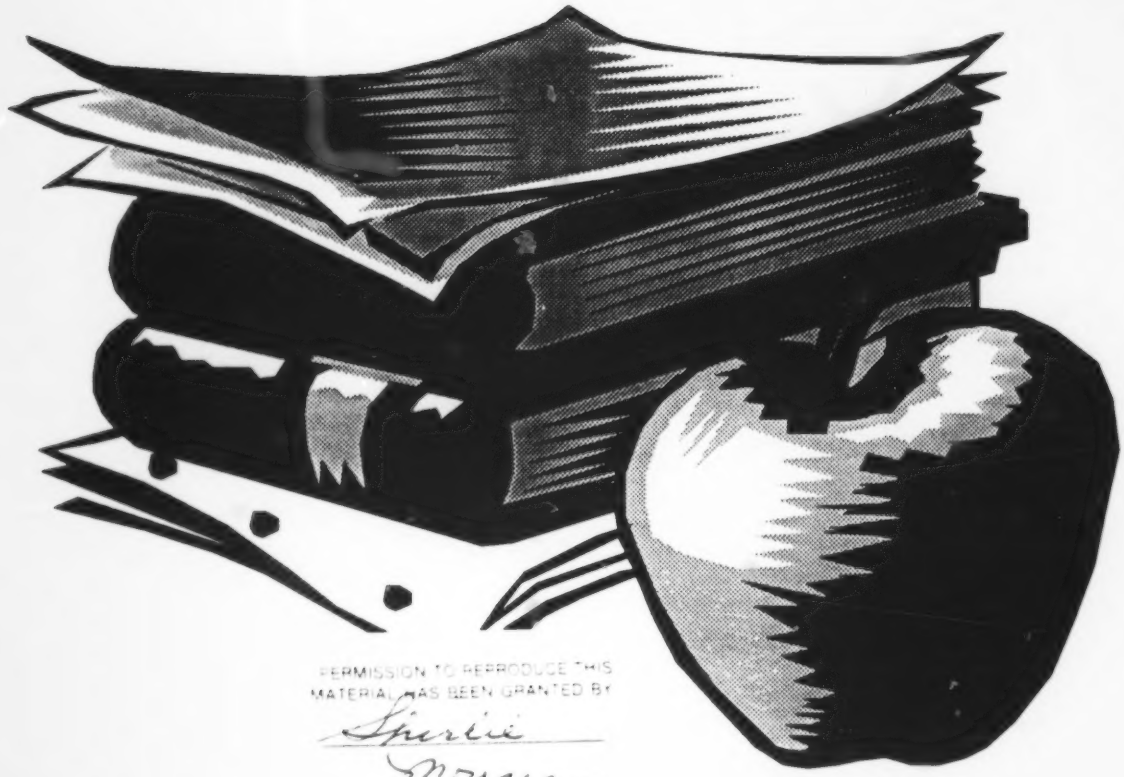

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Edited by
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1. Who are the Gifted?

How do we determine who are gifted students?
There are many different definitions of gifted and talented. According to the state of South Dakota, gifted students are those who have superior ability or potential in the areas of:

1) General intellectual ability
2) Creative thinking
3) Leadership ability or
4) Specific academic aptitude

What are the characteristics of gifted students?
Gifted individuals may have a whole range of characteristics, depending on their abilities, personality, background, etc.

*For example, a person who has general intellectual ability may be very good at many things. They may have good thinking skills, a great body of general knowledge and may solve problems easily.

*A person who is creative may be able to think up unique solutions to problems and things in unusual ways.

*A person who is gifted in leadership may be good at getting other people to accomplish a task.

*The person who has a specific aptitude may have exceptional talent in art, music, drama, math, science, etc.

The gifted individual may also have certain general personality traits such as curiosity, task commitment, initiative, outstanding vocabulary, flexibility.

Certain myths and stereotypes often are attached to the idea of giftedness. Some of these include:

1) The gifted student is always an A student.
2) A gifted individual will be outstanding in all areas.
3) Gifted students will learn in spite of their teachers, parents, etc.

Don't allow these myths and stereotypes to influence your decisions in identification and programming for gifted students.

Why should our district provide a gifted program?
Programming for gifted students is mandated in South Dakota. A district's general philosophy statement advocates the importance of meeting the needs of each individual student. Programming for gifted students is essential in realizing that goal in your district philosophy of education.

Can we do more than the minimum?
Of course. State regulations provide a minimal standard, but do not limit services to be provided. It is the intent of the state to allow each district to have the flexibility in designing the gifted program for their district's unique needs. Allow for growth in your program as you make long range plans for how you will meet those needs.

2. Managing the Program

What are the state requirements?
Each district should provide:

*for an educational plan for each student placed in the gifted program that includes modification of the regular curriculum;

*for parental approval of student participation;

*for monitoring and reporting individual student progress to parents. (See *Administrative Guidelines: 24:03:06.01:03.* Program standards for education of gifted students)

The plan must be approved by your school board and submitted to the State Division of Education. (See *Administrative Guidelines: 24:03:06.01:02*)

Who is responsible for implementing the program?

*The designated gifted coordinator and/or teacher takes direct responsibility for implementing the program.

*Administrative support is imperative if the teacher is to effectively operate the gifted program. Ultimate responsibility for overseeing the program lies with superintendent and principals.

*The gifted review team (see *Administrative Guidelines: 24:03:06.01:05* - Gifted Review Team) must be involved in determining initial participation of a student.

*Many schools maintain an advisory committee for the gifted program to assist in setting and evaluating program goals and objectives.

*The classroom teacher is an important member of the team. He/she is responsible for assisting in modifying the gifted student's curriculum in the regular classroom.

What are the documentation requirements?
An educational plan that records the method of modifying the regular curriculum in addition to documents involved in the screening and identification process should be in place for each identified student.

How are gifted programs funded?
At the present time gifted programs receive state aid for not more than fifty percent of allowable program costs. (See *Administrative Guidelines: 24:03:06.01:06*) Reimbursement is based upon the Annual Report and State Aid Application filed by the district. The remaining cost is the responsibility of the local district.

Where can a gifted teacher go for support?
It is important to establish contact with someone locally who provides moral support, particularly if a district has only one teacher of the gifted. The state gifted consultant is also a good resource. The South Dakota Association for Gifted Children (SDAGC) has established some regional groups in the state and also sponsors an annual conference for exchanging ideas and providing professional growth. Contact the state consultant for information about these groups.

What is the importance of staff development?
Gifted education teachers often work hard to build initial support for a new program; however, sustained support by the entire staff of the district is vital to the preservation of the program. The intent of staff development in gifted education is to increase awareness of the needs of gifted students and to encourage professional growth in strategies for meeting those needs. It is important when planning staff development activities that they be designed to respect the participants as adult learners.

Staff development may take various forms:

- *reading/discussion groups
- *peer coaching
- *observation of other programs
- *video/audiotaping
- *professional meetings
- *inservice sessions with presenters
- *staff newsletter
- *informal visits with staff members

What are certification requirements?
Each certified teacher that is assigned the responsibility to work with students as the gifted education instructor or coordinator must obtain the gifted endorsement as specified in *ARSD 24:03:06.01:09(15)*. See the Administrative Guidelines for specific requirements.

3. Screening and identification

Are there guidelines for how many students my district should serve?
The number of children served in each school district is dependent upon the district plan which specifies the identification procedures and program design for students in grades one through twelve. The regular curriculum of each district varies as to the extent it meets the needs of each gifted student. This will determine the degree of modification of the regular curriculum that would be necessary.

What is the difference between screening and identification?
A screening system includes all the activities for gathering and analyzing appropriate data in order to collect a pool of potentially gifted students. Students are identified as gifted from this pool through a process of referral, evaluation, and placement.

What assessment instruments are available?

A variety of objective and subjective instruments are available. Some of the instruments may include, but not be limited to the following:

General Intellectual Ability	Individual Achievement	Leadership	Creativity	Subjective Measures
WISC -II	Woodcock Johnson R	Sociometric Tests	Torrance Test of Creativity	Case Studies
Standford-Binet	KTEA (Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement)	Checklists	Williams Creativity Assessment	Renzulli Teacher Checklist
K-ABC (Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children				Teacher/Parent Interview
Slosson				Teacher/Parent Checklist

How does a child become a part of the gifted program?

Screening (Pool of potential Gifted Students)

Referral for Evaluation

Individual Data Gathering (Parent Permission Needed)

Evaluation Review Team examines data (may include direct observation, student portfolios, etc.)

Identification Placement or Non-placement recommended

Educational Plan Developed for Identified Students

Special populations?

Certain populations tend to be under-identified in gifted programs. These groups include cultural and ethnic minorities, learning disabled, underachievers, females, troublemakers, the handicapped, poor test takers, and students with disabilities in certain academic areas. It is important that all these groups be considered in screening and identification procedures, using assessment instruments appropriate to their unique needs.

4. Curriculum options

Who determines curriculum for the gifted?

Curriculum should be determined by school district policy, the gifted coordinator, the classroom teacher, and through needs and interests of the student.

What are some delivery models and strategies used in gifted education?

The *South Dakota Administrative Guidelines, pp. 22-26,* suggest a number of different delivery models, such as compacting, independent study, grouping, pull-out, and mentorships.

Each district must adapt any of these approaches or a combination thereof to its particular circumstances. Visiting gifted programs in other school districts may assist in assessing which delivery model will be most effective in your district.

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How can our district assist the classroom teacher to modify curriculum?

The gifted coordinator can assist the classroom teacher in assessing areas of the curriculum in which modification may be appropriate for some gifted students. Alternative enrichment or accelerated activities may be facilitated through the coordinator. The gifted coordinator can also provide ideas for curriculum compacting, projects (individual or group), Kids Kits, short-term pull-outs in any subject area, mentorships, community resources, visiting artists, writers, or other experts in various fields. Also, the coordinator may plan a time to work with whole classrooms to present creative problem solving, writing, or any requested topics.

Is one curriculum appropriate for every child?

If a gifted student is indeed unique in his/her needs, then the gifted program should be tailored to meet those needs. Planned programming for some students will not be appropriate for others. It may be determined by the school district that certain process skills need to be taught to all students in the program, but the manner in which these skills are utilized may be different.

How should we use contests and competitions?

A multitude of contests and competitions are listed in the resource guide published through the office of the state gifted consultant. These programs are appropriate for many students, and do provide some supplemental options for the gifted program. Contests and competitions **should not**, however, form the nucleus of the gifted program.

What can we do with limited time and a limited budget?

A gifted coordinator can make connections among home/school/universities/community to involve volunteers, senior citizens, field experts, parents, and older students. This would be one way in which the time of the gifted facilitator can be extended and program costs can be kept to a minimum. Look for creative solutions. Exchange ideas and materials with other school districts; rotate short-term pull-outs (6-8 week mini classes on different topics - drawing, space, literature discussion, inventions, etc. for various grade levels or interest groups); use teacher-made centers for learning to be shared; look for community field trips that may stimulate individual projects (students can walk or parents may provide transportation). Start with one or two ideas, and they will evolve as time passes.

5. Program and Student Evaluation

How should programs/students be evaluated?

Accountability is important in today's education. Because gifted programs are in their early stages in most areas of the state, it is often difficult to assess effectiveness in programs that are still evolving. Standardized tests are not particularly suitable for evaluating gifted programs and objectives are not always easily quantified. Limited time spent in the program also makes it difficult to measure easily-observed outcomes.

Even though these barriers exist to effective evaluation, some of the following points should be considered.

*At the on-set of the program, attempt to state goals and objectives in such a way so that the district is able to measure effectiveness.

*Students may be evaluated by the products they produce, as well as collecting end of the year evaluations from them concerning effectiveness of the program for them.

*Feedback from parents may also be collected through an end of the year evaluation form.

*Evaluation forms collected from classroom teachers may lend insight into ways in which the program could be improved.

*Maintaining an advisory group made up of classroom teachers, administrator, parent, community representative, and the gifted coordinator is another effective way of providing periodic input and re-evaluation of the program.

These factors should be taken into consideration when evaluating the complete program.

*physical environment'
*administrative support
*parent involvement
*available resources: other faculty, mentors, community resources
*adequate personnel with adequate teaching time allotted
*student projects/portfolios
*existence of differentiated program components

Each year, one-fourth of the school districts in South Dakota are visited by an on-site accreditation review team. Their evaluation of the gifted program will include the following points:

a. Does a school board approved gifted plan exist and is it in compliance with the state requirements for written plans (see p. 3 in *Administrative Guidelines 24:03:06.01:02*)?
b. Does the program have a gifted coordinator or teacher with an endorsement for gifted education?
c. Do identified gifted students have individual plans?
d. How many identified gifted students do you have and who are they?

6. *Parent and Community Involvement*

What is my school's responsibility to parents? Keeping parents informed is part of building good home/school relationships. State regulations for gifted education require the following procedures:

a. Provision for parental approval of student participation (see *Administrative Guidelines: 24:03:06.01:03)*
b. Provision for monitoring and reporting individual student progress to parents (see regulation above)
c. Participation in the gifted review team which determines initial participation (see *Administrative Guidelines: 24:03:06.01:05)*
d. Annual communication of the appeal process to parents (see *Administrative Guidelines: 24:03:06.01:02)*

What rights do parents have specific to gifted education?

Those provisions outlined in the question above are rights of the parent. The parent also has the right to request that their child be considered in the required on-going screening, evaluation and identification processes of the district.

How can we involve the community in our program?

Community Resource surveys can be taken as a way of identifying individuals and programs in the community that may be utilized by the gifted program. Work with the community in the development of a mentorship program with local business leaders. Making presentations to community groups about the gifted program and its needs will assist in opening communication with the community about your program.

School/business/community partnerships may be adopted through the "Education Counts" program. More information can be obtained by contacting local chamber of commerces or the state department. Contact your local America 2000 committee.

How can parents obtain more information about gifted education?

A parent handbook is available through the state gifted consultant's office.

7. Gifted Education Glossary

***acceleration:** a program that provides opportunities for students to progress through material or a program at a faster rate or younger age than is conventional

***allowable costs:** expenditures that are related directly to the educational plans of gifted students; may include salaries, benefits, purchased services, and supplies and materials

***AP:** Advanced Placement is a College Board program of college level courses taught by high school teachers; some colleges give credit for these courses upon successful completion of the AP Exam

***Autonomous Learners Model (ALM):** divides into five dimensions (orientation, individual development, enrichment activities, seminars and in-depth studies) designed to meet the diversified needs of the gifted students. A central point is that if the students have their needs met, they will develop into autonomous learners.

***Bloom's Taxonomy:** a frequently used model for teaching higher level thinking in which each of six levels includes and depends on all those below it. The six levels of thought processes are knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

***brainstorming:** a group problem-solving technique in which the ground rules are 1) withhold judgement of ideas; 2) encourage wild ideas; 3) quantity counts; 4) piggyback on the ideas of others.

***case studies:** involves gathering as much information as possible on a gifted youngster from as many different sources as are available and using this information in making programming decisions.

***contract:** written agreements between teachers and students that outline what students will learn, how they will learn it, in what period of time, and how they will be evaluated.

***convergent thinking:** focusing on one particular/singular answer. Most intelligence tests require convergent thinking.

***CPS:** Creative Problem Solving engages students in divergent and convergent thinking at each of five steps of fact finding, problem finding, ideas finding, solution finding and acceptance finding.

***critical thinking:** goal-directed thinking that uses logical reasoning and objective criteria as foundations for evaluation and decision making.

***curriculum compacting:** a system designed to adapt the regular curriculum to meet the needs of above average students by either eliminating work that has been previously mastered or streamlining work that may be mastered at a pace commensurate with the student's ability. Appropriate enrichment and/or acceleration activities may be used in this time which is gained.

***deductive thinking:** inference that begins with a general statement and proceeds to the specific.

***delivery model:** the framework within which the gifted education program is provided to the students.

***differentiated curriculum:** that process of instruction which is capable of being integrated into the school program and is adaptable to varying levels of individual learning response in the education of the gifted and talented. Content, process or method of instruction and product or outcome may be modified.
***discontinuance:** the procedure used to determine whether or not an identified gifted student should continue participation in the program.

***divergent thinking:** focuses on many answer, coming up with new and unique ideas about things.

***enrichment:** refers to richer, more varied educational experiences that replace, supplement, and extend instruction normally offered by the school.

***FPS:** Future Problem Solving is a competitive program that teaches students to use an effective five-step creativity model: gathering information, identifying problems, generating ideas for the main problem, itemizing criteria, and evaluating ideas and preparing the best solution for presentation.

***HOTS:** Higher Order Thinking Skills is a computer thinking skills program which uses higher order thinking skills to improve basic skills.

***inductive thinking:** inference that starts with specific information and leads to generalization.
*itinerant teacher: a teacher who provides services in more that one attendance center, or in more than one school system.

***Junior Great Books:** using a method known as "shared inquiry," trained discussion leaders work with groups of students in an effort to lend new insights to literary works of the world.

***Kids Kits:** Kids Interest Discovery Studies Kits is a multi-media approach to motivating students to ask and answer questions on topics of interest to them. Each kit contains high interest materials that promote independent, self-directed learning; thinking and questioning skills; research and study skills; and awareness and use of learning resources.

***mentorship:** individual students would work with an assigned adult or other resource person on a regular basis in some area of interest to the student.

***multiple talent approach:** an instructional model that emphasizes both academic and creative talents; sees creative thinking as falling into eight categories: productive thinking, planning, communicating, forecasting, decision-making, implementing, human relations and discerning opportunities.

***Odyssey of the Mind:** a competitive program designed to involve students in creative activities and creative thinking through the solution of a long-term problem and spontaneous problem-solving.

Omnibus: designed as a community volunteer program for gifted and talented that provides enrichment in the sciences or the humanities through numerous prepared study units.

***parent nomination:** a method by which parents can provide information about their child's advanced abilities and knowledge in addition to that which is available in school.

***peer nomination:** a method by which pupils are asked to list children whom they would like to have help them with their various academic tasks, those who are good at various tasks, subjects, have original ideas, etc.

***Pull-out model:** children leave their heterogeneous classroom for a specific time each week to participate in a special class with their gifted peers.

***Schoolwide Enrichment Model:** a combination of the Renzulli Enrichment Triad Model and the Revolving Door Identification Model. It is a method of identifying high-potential youth and of promoting the development of gifted behaviors and creativity in young people.

***self nomination:** a method by which an individual nominates him/her self for a gifted program.

***Talents Unlimited:** a program for elementary and secondary levels using such divergent thinking processes as productive thinking, communication, planning, decision making and forecasting.

***gifted underachiever:** a student who appears to possess considerable intellectual potential but is performing in a mediocre fashion in the educational setting.

8. Additional Resources

The suggested resources listed below may be used to expand the base of materials available to a district.

A Handbook on Gifted Education - Nick Colangelo and Gary Davis

Autonomous Learner Model - George Betts

Comprehensive Curriculum for Gifted Learners - Joyce Van Tassel Baska and John Feldhusen

Creativity is Forever - Gary Davis

Curriculum Development for the Gifted - June Maker

Education of the Gifted - James Gallagher

Education of the Gifted: Programs and Perspectives - Joan Franklin Smutny and Rita Haynes Blocksom

Gifted Students in Regular Classrooms - Beverly N. Parke

Giftedness, Conflict, and Underachievement - Joanne Rand Whitmore

Growing Up Gifted - Barbara Clark

Guiding the Gifted Child - James Webb

Instructional Strategies for Teaching the Gifted - Jeanette Plauche' Parker

Planning Effective Curriculum for Gifted Learners - Joyce Van Tassel Baska

Reaching the Gifted Underachiever - Patricia Supplee

Roet's Leadership Program - Lois Roets

Smart Girls, Gifted Women - Barbara Kerr

Taxonomy of Education Objectives. Handbook I: Cognitive Domain - Benjamin Bloom

Teaching Models in Education of the Gifted - June Maker

The Gifted Kids Survival Guide - Judy Galbraith

The Gifted Kids Survival Guide II - Jim Delisle and Judy Galbraith

The Schoolwide Enrichment Model - Joseph Renzulli and Sally Reis

Underachievement Syndrome: Causes and Cures - Sylvia Rimm

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